high walls around a central courtyard are all that it consists of, and some of the Omani guns still remain in the towers. The fort was built in 1800 by the Ruler of Muscat, Sultan bin Ahmed, who in that year seized Bahrain from the Khalifah and sent his brother, Sayed Said, to govern the Islands they were soon expelled but later returned. The Muscatis remained in their fort for nine years, but after their expulsion in 1809 by the Khalifah-Saudi alliance the fort was left deserted.

Near Muharraq town is the fort of Abu Mahur, already mentioned in connection with the Portuguese map and named after one of the largest undersea springs in Bahrain, which is situated near it. The fort, which dominates the southern approach to Muharraq and Manama, was built on the island-peninsular of Abu Mahur by Shaikh Abdulla al-Khalifah, who ruled jointly with his brother Sulman, builder of the fort at Rifaa ash-Sharqi. In 1843 Shaikh Abdulla was expelled from Bahrain by his son Muhammad, who was also unable to enjoy a peaceful reign, for after a dispute with Qatar Muhammad was replaced as Ruler of Bahrain by his brother Ali and the British shelled the fort of Abu Mahur, which was destroyed with the exception of one tower. More recently the remains of the fort and the island was given to the Baluchi retainers of the Khalifah, but in 1930 the Baluchis were given land elsewhere and the island was turned into a Quarantine Station. This is therefore a fort which visitors are not advised to visit.

THE QANATS

"Qanat" is the Arabic name for the underground water channels which are found in many parts of Bahrain, particularly in the south-west of the island. Here, among others, is a long channel running inland from Sadad, another brings water to Karzarkan from the spring called Ijraiyi, a mile and a half to the north, and a third channel runs from the spring of Malakiya to the village of the same name. These are but a few of the many channels in Bahrain.

These channels are present in great numbers in Persia and are also found in eastern Saudi-Arabia and Syria. It is probable that those in Bahrain were first built by the Persians. It is stated in at least one history that they were the work of the Persian King Anushirvan who captured Bahrain from the Arabs in the fourth century A.D. They have often been mentioned by travellers to Bahrain and in a local history it is stated that during a war that took place in the eighth century between the people of Bahrain and an army sent by the Caliph, the Bahrainis made good use of these same channels by passing through them till they reached the rear of the enemy forces and then making a successful surprise attack.

The channels were built to prevent the wastage of water from evaporation which would have occurred had the water been carried in surface channels. By this method the water is sheltered from the sun and its flow is not hindered by falls of sand or the movements of sand dunes. It seems that the channels were first built as open ditches and then roofed with slabs of sea rock, called feroush. The roofs of the channels are sloping and after construction they were covered with sand to the

Part II.—THE HISTORY OF THE BAHRAIN ISLANDS.

175 Of all the Persian Gulf shaikhdoms the Bahrain islands have had by far the most interesting and varied history, of which this brief outline must of necessity mention only the most outstanding events. The riches of Bahrain's ancient pearling industry have drawn the attention of many rulers to the islands, whose strategic position and fresh-water springs have meant that for centuries there has been a settled population.

101 175 It is believed that the names Niduk-ki and Dilmun (or Tilwun) which appear in Babylonian and Assyrian inscriptions found in Iraq were the ancient names of the Bahrain islands, in which case events in Bahrain's history are recorded from the third millennium B.C., as long as 5,000 years ago.

Unfortunately only one cuneiform inscription has been found in Bahrain itself, an inscription which has been translated as follows: "The Palace of Rimugus, the servant of Inzaq (Mercury) of the tribe of Aqiru."[1]

This inscription appears to have been removed from a Bahrain mosque by its finder, Captain Durand, and its present whereabouts is unknown.

The place-name Niduk-ki appears in the Babylonian myth of the Creation, while the Assyrians also had a tradition that their civilisation, and more especially the invention of the cuneiform script, originated in Dilmun. The tumuli of Bahrain bear a very striking resemblance to Phoenician graves, a fact noticed by many writers from the time of Strabo to the present day. Archæologists who have studied them are, however, still unable to agree as to their origin beyond saying that they are of great antiquity. [171]

175 The first historical reference to Bahrain appears in an inscription concerning the conquests of Sargon of Akkad, who reigned in the third millennium B.C. In this inscription he is described as having reduced Niduk-ki and another seaport, and during the following centuries there are many references to Niduk-ki and Dilmun, giving the impression that the places referred to were both islands and trading centres. In 1820 B.C. a king of Larsa, in Southern Mesopotamia, sent a trading expedition to Bahrain, obtaining there stone, metals, wood and ivory, materials probably brought to Bahrain from India. Towards the end of the eighth century B.C. another Sargon, the Assyrian monarch also gained control of Dilmun by means of threats and economic pressure, and we have an interesting description of the contemporary Bahraini ruler: "Uperi, king of Dilmun, who lives like a fish, thirty double hours away in the midst of the sea of the rising sun, heard of my lordly might and brought his gifts."

1 [For footnote see Cat. 114, p. 87 -- Analyst]